

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of January 23, 2018**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Chair Kenneth W. Goslant, Selectmen Lynn Doney, Julie H. Goodrich, Kenneth Johnson, and K. David Maxwell (absent). Also present were Town Manager Jeff Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Rosemarie Pelletier (Norwich University), Kaitlyn Keating (Northfield Community Development Network), Lindsay Cahill Lord (Northfield Community Development Network), Carolyn Stevens (Northfield Community Development Network), John Stevens (Northfield Community Development Network), Jane Pekol (Northfield Conservation Commission), Brian T. Fitzgerald (Vermont Natural Resources Council), Steve Fitzhugh (Northfield Utility Commissioner), Sally Davidson (Recreation Committee), and Elroy Hill.

Chair Goslant called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

- III. SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** There were no changes to the posted agenda.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED)

- a. Rosemarie Pelletier, Norwich University: ALARA World Congress.** Dr. Pelletier is the program director for the Master of Public Administration program at Norwich University (NU). She informed the Select Board that ALARA (Action Learning Action Research Association, Inc.) will be holding its 10th World Congress on the NU campus from Sunday, June 17, 2018, through Wednesday, June 20, 2018. Dr. Pelletier stated this is a great honor for NU and the Northfield community as this is the first time the ALARA World Congress has been held in North America. She added ALARA emphasizes "hands-on" learning and it was felt NU was an appropriate site for this meeting as this has been part of NU's mission statement since its founding in 1819. Between one and two hundred (100-200) international scholars are expected to attend the ALARA World Congress and Northfield residents (especially NU faculty, staff, students, and alumni) are encouraged to take part in the event. Chair Goslant asked if the event would require any extra security from local law enforcement. Dr. Pelletier has spoken to the Northfield Police Department (NPD) and a risk assessment has been conducted. Additional precautions do not seem necessary at this time.
- b. Kaitlyn Keating and Lindsay Cahill Lord: Northfield Community Development Network (NCDN) Update.** Ms. Keating said NCDN would be holding its first business education series event on Thursday, January 25, 2018, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the Community Room located in the Brown Public Library. Caitlin Corkins from the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development will be present and the topic of this workshop will be "Village Designation: What Does It Mean for My Business?" Since the Northfield downtown area and Northfield Falls now have this designation, the emphasis will be on the new opportunities and resources available to local businesses such as "historic tax credits, code improvement credits, technology credits, priority consideration for state grants, and more." Local business leaders have been specifically invited to this workshop but other interested Northfield residents also are encouraged to attend. Additional events will be scheduled in the near future and topics will depend upon public input. Chair Goslant asked if Northfield Rotarians are involved in this process. Ms. Lord said individual members have been invited to take part in the workshop but the organization doesn't have a direct role in the process.
- c. Jane Pekol, Northfield Conservation Commission (NCC): TDS Land Purchase.** Ms. Pekol wanted to confirm there would be an article on the 2018 Northfield Town Meeting warning asking voters to authorize the expenditure of \$25,000 to purchase the 48.9-acre parcel at the summit of Paine Mountain. The estimated purchase price of the parcel is \$35,000 so the remaining \$10,000 balance would be covered by NCC fundraising, donations, etc. Should the purchase be completed, the parcel would be annexed to the adjoining Town Forest. Selectman Goodrich has learned of some liability issues she would like addressed before she can approve putting this article on the warning. Manager Schulz said the NCC had been asked to provide the proposed article wording and this has been provided. Since this matter involves legal issues, it will be discussed later in the meeting in executive session.

- d. **Brian T. Fitzgerald, Vermont Dam Removal Task Force: Cross Brothers Dam Removal Discussion.** Mr. Fitzgerald is a member of the Vermont Natural Resources Council (VNRC) and he also worked seventeen (17) years for the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) prior to his retirement in 2013. As Utility Commissioner Stephen Fitzhugh explained, VNRC would like to start a dialogue with the Select Board regarding the Cross Brothers Dam, which is located in the Dog River just east of the Main Street Bridge, and the reasons why it should be removed. He added the Friends of the Winooski River are working with VNRC to obtain the needed grant funds to remove this dam, which would restore the natural flow of the river, encourage fish migration, etc. Mr. Fitzhugh believes removing this dam also would have flood mitigation benefits as he feels its presence increased the impact of Tropical Storm Irene on the downtown area. There now are plans to establish a new group, the Dog River Conservancy, which would oversee any concerns with the river bisecting our community. Mr. Fitzgerald said Northfield has a history of working with ANR and VNRC to remove dams that no longer have any purpose, including one on Cox Brook Road in 2008 and another on Union Brook in 2010. He would like the Select Board to authorize starting the process on removing the Cross Brothers Dam, which he estimated should take about two to three (2-3) years.

Selectman Johnson asked if the removal process would include taking out some of the river gravel that has settled in the area. Mr. Fitzgerald said it would because otherwise the gravel would just be pushed downstream when the river's natural flow is restored. After the river is dredged, usable gravel can be delivered to the Town Highway's pit. Selectman Johnson did not like the results when the Union Brook dam was removed. Mr. Fitzgerald was not involved in that project, which he said had a number of problems. He said the Cross Brothers Dam removal should be much more straight-forward process. Selectman Doney asked if the river walls near Dollar General and Kenyon's Hardware would be upgraded in the process. Mr. Fitzgerald said this would depend on the engineering study. Selectman Goodrich has learned about the amount the State of Vermont spends each year on dam maintenance and favors the removal of any unnecessary ones. Chair Goslant asked if this project could include dredging the riverbed upstream of the dam as far as Union Brook. The riverbed there has a large amount of built-up gravel, etc. Mr. Fitzgerald said this would be part of the initial study and would be done if thought appropriate. Chair Goslant thinks this project would improve fishing and swimming opportunities along the Dog River and favors it for these reasons.

Manager Schulz asked about the timeline for this project. Mr. Fitzgerald said a window for grant applications would open in about three (3) months. There had been a potential grant opportunity closing next week but those funds were allocated elsewhere. Since the municipality owns the dam, the Select Board would need to approve a letter of commitment before the project can go forward. Selectman Doney asked if the dam removal would cost the municipality anything. Mr. Fitzgerald said there would be no local match costs during the engineering phase. There might be some in-kind services required during the actual dam removal. Motion by Selectman Doney, seconded by Selectman Johnson, to authorize Manager Schulz to draft a letter of commitment for the Cross Brothers Dam Removal project. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **December 21, 2017 (Budget Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Doney, seconded by Selectman Johnson, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-1, with Selectman Goodrich abstaining.**
- b. **January 4, 2018 (Budget Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Goodrich, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- c. **January 9, 2018 (Budget Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Goodrich, seconded by Selectman Johnson, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- d. **January 9, 2018 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Goodrich, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve the minutes. Selectman Johnson would like the discussion of possible household energy reduction workshops amended to show some local homeowners already "have reduced" (rather than "can reduce") their energy usage by switching to alternative heating sources. **Motion to approve amended minutes passed 4-0-0.**
- e. **January 11, 2018 (Budget Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Goodrich, seconded by Selectman Johnson, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #15-18.** Motion by Selectman Goodrich, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve Warrant #15-18 in the amount of \$152,055.14. Selectman Goodrich found two (2) instances where the municipality was charged the same amount (\$330.13) for replacing damaged fire truck tires. Manager Schulz said he discussed this invoice with Highway Foreman Trent Tucker and their decision was to split it evenly between the Fire Department and Grounds/Parks/Facilities. Selectman Goodrich asked about a \$1,000 payment for "ArcGIS User Maintenance." Manager Schulz said ArcGIS is a mapping program, mainly used by the Listers and the Zoning Administrator, which requires an annual maintenance fee. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through January 14, 2018.** Motion by Selectman Goodrich, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$94,829.81. Selectman Doney is pleased NPD overtime expenses continue to decrease. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Approval of FY 2018/2019 Town Budget.** As the Select Board will be holding an additional budget meeting this Thursday night (01/25/18), budget approval will be tabled for now.
- b. **DRAFT 2018 Town Meeting Warning.** Selectman Goodrich is concerned about the article seeking voter approval "to authorize the Select Board to use no more than \$15,000 of existing economic development funds to remove and replace the Welcome signs in Northfield." When the group behind this effort addressed the Select Board last fall (09/26/17), it was stated the ballot article would seek \$1,500 in public funds with no indication these would be economic development funds. Manager Schulz acknowledged this discrepancy but added the article wording was on the petition the requisite number (5%) of Northfield voters signed. He will look into this but doubts anything can be done to change this. Selectman Doney feels the Select Board members were misled about the amount of public funds to be requested as well as the source. Carolyn Stevens thought the economic development funds came from a federal block grant. Manager Schulz said at the 2014 Annual Town Meeting Northfield voters authorized "the creation of a reserve fund in an amount not to exceed \$100,000 for the purpose of economic development". This amount came entirely from Northfield taxpayers.

VIII. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **Zoning Bylaw Violations.** Selectman Goodrich asked who should be contacted if someone suspects a possible violation of Northfield's zoning bylaws. Manager Schulz said the Zoning Administrator (Stephen Hatch) is the first point of contact. He will investigate any complaints and, if the complaint is valid, will contact the violator with a polite letter asking for correction. If there is no compliance, a less polite follow-up letter will be sent warning of potential fines, etc. if the situation isn't addressed in a timely manner. The next step is to forward the matter to the Environmental Court for its determination. Although the Environmental Court does have the ability to impose hefty fines (up to \$125 per day until the violation is corrected), the emphasis throughout the process is to get the violation corrected. Selectman Goodrich asked if there would be a paper trail of each suspected violation. Manager Schulz said Mr. Hatch maintains these files in his office.
- b. **Open Meeting Law.** Steve Davis was scheduled to address the Select Board about Vermont's Open Meeting Law tonight under "Public Participation" but was not present. Selectman Goodrich has looked into VLCT paperwork on this and still believes Select Board subcommittee meetings do not need to be warned beforehand if a Select Board quorum is not present. However, Selectman Goodrich feels in the interest of transparency, it might be a good idea to warn such meetings in advance even if it is not required. Chair Goslant noted some of these subcommittee meetings are arranged at the last minute.

IX. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a. **Street Sweeper Sale.** Manager Schulz noted the Select Board discussed selling the municipality's street sweeper at a recent budget meeting. The plan is to contract the street sweeping to a private contractor who would come in twice a year (spring and fall). Before he proceeds with any potential sale, Manager Schulz would like the Select Board's formal authorization to proceed. There was no objection. Chair Goslant hopes the \$15,000 estimated sale price can be used to offset any budget increases for highway paving, sidewalk restoration, etc.

- b. Main Street Bridge Replacement.** Manager Schulz has been working with Dan Currier from the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) on starting the process to replace the Main Street Bridge, which the State acknowledges is in poor condition. The bridge now is rated as the one most needing replacement in the Central Vermont region. However, we still are looking at two (2) to three (3) years before the bridge actually is replaced.
- c. New Stormwater Basin.** Manager Schulz said Mr. Currier will be attending the next Select Board regular meeting (02/13/18) regarding a received grant that will pay for the installation of a new stormwater basin on Union Street. The \$175,000 project cost will be entirely covered by the grant with no local match. With the assistance of CVRPC, the municipality has received over \$300,000 in grant funds for stormwater projects over the past three (3) years. As a result, Northfield appears to be far ahead of most other Vermont communities in preparing for future compliance with upcoming (and more stringent) ANR stormwater mandates. Selectman Johnson asked when this project would begin. Manager Schulz said in July 2018. Most of the work will be outside the road and the Highway Department will be coordinating their own installation of a new waterline in the area with this project.
- d. Bull Run Solar Farm Project.** Manager Schulz has been contacted by the owner-operators of the proposed solar farm. The first step in getting the solar farm operational is upgrading the power lines to the site and this will take place in the next couple months.

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED).

- a. Sally Davidson, Recreation Committee: Regular Meeting Schedule.** Ms. Davidson said the regular meeting day for the Recreation Committee had been the second Monday of the month but several members had been unable to attend then. The new meeting day will be the first Tuesday of the month. The meetings will continue to be held at 6:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building.
- b. Sally Davidson, Recreation Committee: Winter Carnival.** Ms. Davidson said the carnival remains on schedule for the weekend of March 10-11, 2018. NU has offered use of its indoor facilities for swimming, basketball, etc. There also will be a chili cook-off at the Senior Center and the Committee is considering a chicken barbeque as a fundraiser with tickets sold in advance. Ms. Davidson will keep the Select Board informed as the calendar of events is finalized.
- c. Sally Davidson, Recreation Committee: Budgeted Committee Funds.** Ms. Davidson noted the proposed FY 2018/2019 Recreation Committee budget includes \$1,600 for department supplies. The Committee now plans to use \$1,000 of this to purchase Christmas decorations. Ms. Davidson is asking the Select Board to move this \$1,000 to a CIP account so the funds will rollover to the next fiscal year if the full amount isn't spent in time. Manager Schulz said this will be done.

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION. Motion by Selectman Goodrich, seconded by Selectman Doney, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1), in order to discuss a legal matter and a contract negotiation with Manager Schulz present. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 8:40 p.m.

Motion by Selectman Goodrich, seconded by Selectman Johnson, to come out of executive session.
Motion passed 4-0-0.

The Board came out of executive session at 8:59 p.m. No action was taken.

XII. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Selectman Goodrich, seconded by Selectman Doney, to adjourn.
Motion passed 4-0-0.

The Board adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.

These minutes were approved at the regular Select Board meeting of February 13, 2018.